UNITED
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14 April 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

STATISTICAL COMMISSION
Special session
11-15 April 1994
Item 10 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS SPECIAL SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: William McLENNAN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Chapter ___.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Statistical Commission held a special session at United Nations Headquarters from 11 to __ April 1994. The Commission held _____ meetings (466th to _____).

2. The session was opened by the temporary Chairman, Mr. Miguel Cervera Flores (Mexico).

3. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the Director of the Statistical Division addressed the Commission.

B. Attendance

4. The session was attended by all 24 States members of the Commission, Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and observers for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. A list of participants is given in annex I.

C. Election of officers

5. At its 466th meeting, on 11 April, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Jozef Olenski (Poland)

Vice-Chairman: Héctor Eduardo Montero (Argentina)
R. Thamarajakshi (India)
David Diangamo (Zambia)

Rapporteur: William McLennan (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

D. Agenda and organization of work

6. At its 466th meeting, on 11 April, the Commission adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.3/1994/1. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Strengthening international statistical cooperation.
4. Implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (1993 SNA).
5. Technical cooperation in statistics.
6. Fundamental principles of official statistics.
7. Coordination and integration of international statistical programmes.
8. Programme questions:
   (a) Programme performance and implementation;
   (b) Programme objectives and planning.
9. Provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.
10. Report of the Commission on its special session.

7. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the organization of the work of the session (E/CN.3/1994/L.1).

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS SPECIAL SESSION

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Addendum

Rapporteur: W. McLENNAN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Chapter ____

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COOPERATION

(Agenda item 3)

1. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the progress that had been made on the recommendations and decisions that it had made at its twenty-seventh session. It welcomed the strong cooperation that was evident among the international organizations, and endorsed the improved methods of operation that had been introduced and the close working relationships that had been developed by the Working Group and the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

2. The Commission stressed the central role of The Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat in promoting the coordination of international work. It reaffirmed the important role the regional commissions must play as well, and it considered that the mandate of the statistical work undertaken in the regional commissions should be specified in operational terms to enable them to fulfil that role. The Commission adopted the following text [to be added]. In addition, the Commission recognized that extra resources would be required at the regional level.

Action taken by the Commission

3. The Commission requested:

(a) The Secretariat to study national and regional experiences, with a view to adapting practices that may be useful in promoting coordination and development at the international level;

(b) Countries and international organizations to improve the network of communications among themselves, particularly through electronic methods, to further promote coordination.

4. As a matter of principle, the Commission reiterated the importance of minimizing duplication or overlap in data collection from countries and of maximizing data-sharing among the international organizations. It also emphasized the importance of coordination in related international statistical standards and guidelines, taking due account of differences in national circumstances, particularly in the context of the 1993 SNA.

5. The Commission also requested the Secretariat in future to prepare self-contained reports, in so far as it was possible.

6. After a wide-ranging discussion on the general work of the task forces, the Commission:

(a) Decided that the task forces should concentrate initially on the coordination of statistical activities across the international agencies;

(b) Suggested that its Working Group should continue to play an active "bureau" role in monitoring and assisting with the work of the task forces;

(c) Encouraged all the task forces to examine closely the work of the relevant agencies on data collection, processing and dissemination, the development and implementation of standards, concepts and methods, the development of directories, inventories and other tasks, and technical cooperation;

(d) Requested the Secretariat to compile a single statement of the agreed terms of reference of the task forces;

(e) Requested the task forces to keep national statistical offices informed of developments.

7. It was on this basis that the Commission then reviewed the reports of the separate task forces.

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Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: W. McLENNAN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Chapter _____

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL COOPERATION

Inter-Agency Task Force on International Trade Statistics

(Agenda item 3)

1. The representative of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), as the convenor of the Task Force, introduced the report of the Task Force (E/CN.3/1994/7). He also provided updated information arising from the meeting of the Task Force, which took place from 15 to 17 February 1994.

2. The Commission welcomed the significant achievements accomplished by the Task Force, the efficient division of labour that existed among the members, the clear focus on the mandate, and the task-oriented approach, with clear time-frames for completion of the various tasks.

Action taken by the Commission

3. The Commission endorsed the future work programme for the Task Force, and in particular:

(a) Emphasized the need to assist countries, including countries with economies in transition, to improve their international trade data, particularly by training workshops in those countries;

(b) Encouraged countries to compile and disseminate their international trade statistics according to international concepts and definitions;

(c) Requested the Task Force to provide more extensive descriptions of its outputs in future reports so that countries would know better what was available in that field.